

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

The Applicants appreciate the Examiner's willingness to conduct an interview with the Applicants' representative on October 3, 2007.

By the foregoing amendment, claims 15 and 27-29 have been amended, new claims 33 and 34 have been added, and claims 9, 11, 12, 14, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26 and 30-32 have been canceled. Claims 1-8, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22 and 25 have been previously canceled. Thus, claims 15, 17, 27-29, 33 and 34 are currently pending in the application and subject to examination.

Interview Summary

In the interview conducted on October 3, 2007, it was agreed that claims 15, 17 and 27-29 are allowable over the applied art of record. It was further agreed that if, upon examination of the instant amendment, any informal matters exist which would delay allowance of the instant application, the Examiner would telephone Applicants' representative to resolve such issues, and that such resolution may be made by Examiner amendment, if necessary, upon authorization of Applicants' representative.

Informal Matters

In the Office Action mailed May 4, 2007, claims 9, 11-12, 14-15, 17-18, 20-21, 23-24 and 26-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph as allegedly containing subject matter not disclosed in the specification. The Applicants submit that the subject matter incorporated into independent claims 15 and 27 by the last response may be found in the specification as filed at, for example, page 16, line 24 – page 17,

line 13. However, claims 15 and 27-29 have been further amended responsive this rejection, and claims 9, 11, 12, 14, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26 and 30-32 have been canceled. If any additional amendment is necessary to overcome the objections and rejection, the Examiner is requested to contact the Applicant's undersigned representative, as agreed in the interview conducted on October 3, 2007.

Rejections Under 35 USC § 101

Claims 9, 11, 12, 14, 21, 23, 24 and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101. It is noted that claims 9-14, 18-26 and 30-32 have been canceled, thereby rendering the rejection thereof moot.

Rejections Under 35 USC § 103

Claims 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, and 26-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,577,811 to Kikuchi et al. (hereinafter, "Kikuchi") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,966,495 to Takahashi et al. (hereinafter "Takahashi"). It is noted that claims 15 and 27-29 have been amended and claims 9, 11, 12, 14, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26 and 30-32 have been canceled. To the extent that the rejection remains applicable to the claims currently pending, the Applicants hereby traverse the rejection, as follows.

As was discussed and agreed upon during the October 3, 2007, interview, the Applicants submit that claims 15 and 27-29 are patentably distinct, and therefore allowable, over the applied art of record. The Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowability of these claims.

New Claims 33 and 34

New claims 33 and 34 depend from allowable claims 15 and 27, respectively. As such, the Applicants submit that claims 33 and 34 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claims 15 and 27.

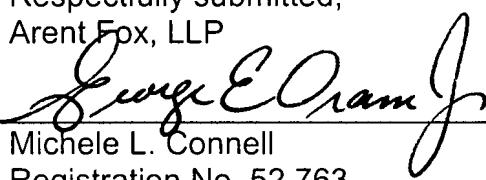
Conclusion

For all of the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claims 15, 17, 27-29, 33 and 34 are in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowability is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner determine that any further action is necessary to place this application into better form, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of time. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment associated with this communication to Deposit Account No. 01-2300 referencing client matter number **107156-09069**.

Respectfully submitted,
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